

# South Precinct Email Community Newsletter

January 9, 2007



Dear Community Friends,

Happy New Year! Over the next few newsletters, we're going to include practical and effective security tips to help secure your home from residential burglary and to make your neighborhood less attractive to the potential burglar.

## **Home Security – What Works**

Physically securing your home is usually one of the least expensive and most effective burglary prevention measures. First, lock your doors and windows. When you are away from home, even for a short period of time, make sure your doors are locked and that your windows are shut and locked. Burglars look for an opportunity. An open window or door is an opportunity and I still read a number of incident reports where the burglar gained entry through an opened or unlocked door or window.

### **Recommendations Regarding Your Doors Include:**

- Exterior doors should be strong enough to withstand excessive force (i.e. solid core wood or metal).
- Install good quality dead bolt locks with at least a 1" throw on all exterior doors.
- Replace the existing screws in the strike plates with screws that are 3-4" long. When a door is forced open, it is the jamb that splinters and gives, not the door. By securing the strike plates with 3"-4" long screws, you secure the jamb to the wall stud. When the deadbolt lock is engaged, the bolt goes into the jamb and the jamb is now secured to the framing of the home. This makes it much more difficult for a person to force open a properly locked door.
- If you have double cylinder deadbolt locks (one that requires a key on both sides to open it), don't leave the keys in the lock, clearly displayed or within close proximity of the doors. **Note: per Seattle Fire Code, double cylinder deadbolts cannot be installed in rental properties.**
- If there is an interior door that separates the garage from the main living area, consider it the same as an exterior door and adopt the same precautions; deadbolt lock with a 1" throw and longer screws in the strike plates.
- The main entrance door should have a door-wide angle (180 degree) viewer/peephole.

In our next newsletter, we'll discuss windows and doors with glass portions.

## **Be Mindful Who Is Out And About In Your Neighborhood.**

Recently in the North Beacon Hill area, a young man (16-20) knocked twice on a neighbor's door at mid-day. The neighbor was slow to answer the door and assumes the young man thought that no one was home because he started to jiggle the door handle as the resident approached the door. When the resident answered the door, the young man quickly asked where the VA hospital was and soon was on his way. The doorknob jiggle told the resident that the man's story was probably not legit and a police report was filed. About an hour later, another neighbor a few blocks away had an unknown male come to the door. He knocked loudly several times and rang the doorbell. His two friends (one of whom fits the description given of the young man in the previous incident) waited for him on the sidewalk. When the resident answered the door, the young man asked for Cyrus. Afterwards, the young man went on his way. The neighbor found it suspicious, but didn't file a report because there was no overt attempt to gain entry.

What is described above is a typical burglar tactic: find out if someone is home; if they are come up with some cover story as to why you're there; if no one is home, look for an open door window or make forced entry where you are least likely to be observed. Two things to keep in mind: First, if it seems suspicious to you, it probably is. Tell each other and call 911. Second, you don't have to wait for an overt attempt before you act. Trust your gut.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator